



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

HMP/YOI ELMLEY

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period 1st November 2010 to 31st October 2011 inclusive.

Views of the Members and factual comments of the Governor have been taken into account in order to ensure balanced reporting.

The baseline CNA is 753, and the Operational Capacity 1252. Actual occupancy continues to run just below the OPCAP level.

The establishment is the local prison for most of Kent housing remand and sentenced adult prisoners (Category B & C), and remand Young Offenders.

It should also be noted here that the prison continues to house Vulnerable Prisoners (remand), Foreign Nationals (remand, sentenced and those whose sentence has expired) and Lifers. This eclectic mix is not conducive to excellence in all fields and tends to stretch resources to the limits. Whilst Management and staff continue to maintain good standards in their roles, it is impossible for them to achieve total success in every area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IMB Chair attends meetings with the Area Manager quarterly, as well as with the lead Governor of the Sheppey Group. The Area meetings are chaired by the IMB Area Representative, a post currently filled on a temporary co-opted basis.

Board members still spend too much time dealing with matters that should have been addressed by staff. This has been in part due to the ineffectiveness of the personal officer scheme, which is difficult to organise in a Local prison and will only become more challenging in the face of further financial cuts.

Budget cuts would still seem to be the focal point going forward. We feel we must again make two general points here: any cuts that result in prisoners spending more time in cell can only increase tensions; any cuts that reduce or eradicate prisoner incentive can only increase tensions.

The Board is still deeply concerned about the number of employment places available to prisoners.

It is sad to report that this year has seen three deaths in custody, two of which appear to be from natural causes, and one which would seem to be self-inflicted.

Once again we must highlight the delay that occurs between the time of a death and the necessary inquest. This inordinate amount of time between the two events only gives rise to more suffering for families and does not allow them timely closure. Despite this point being raised year after year, the situation does not improve and we receive no

satisfactory answers. Elmley still has five, maybe six inquests outstanding from deaths as far back as 2008, or further.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Board numbers are sufficient to effectively monitor the prison. Continued success in recruitment has made this possible.

We warned in our last report that continued financial cuts could result in unrest amongst the prisoner population. This year has seen an unprecedented number of serious incidents, most of which were resolved by negotiation, but with some requiring the deployment of the National Tactical Response Group. No IMB members can recall any incidents of this status prior to this year in the life of the prison. Most of these call-outs were in response to incidents 'at height'.

Whilst there is no direct evidence that these episodes are linked to financial cuts, there is no doubt that budget cuts cannot improve the situation and that the contra opinion is more likely. This does not bode well for the coming year, and those responsible for imposing arbitrary cuts would do well to heed the warning signs.

It was sad to see the publication of an indifferent MQPL report, with seemingly no progress from the previous one. This has given the new Governor some areas to work on. On the upside, the prison has again received accreditation from Investors In People, after it had previously lapsed.

Elmley still continues to house some prisoners in triple cells. This stretches the bounds of decency, and we welcome the Governor's intention to reduce or eradicate this.

Coupled with the effect of further restrictions in prisoners' regimes due to budget cuts, the system will soon fall prey to the Prisoners' Earnings Act. Should this ultimately impact on the closed estate with the parameters as stated, then over 200 of Elmley's population would be affected given the current demographic. There would, we assume, also be further burden placed on the administration. Where the IMB may have further issue is in the event that prisoners' pay is 'capped' in order to eliminate the need for any increased administration. This would be easily achievable at Elmley where employment is at a premium, and part-time working would be viable.

Issues for the Minister

Shortage of staff (**paras 3 & 4**)

Time delay to inquests after deaths in custody (**page 4**)

Issues revolving around employment (**pages 4 & 5, paras 57-61**)

The number of serious incidents (**page 5**)

Prisoners housed in triple cells (**page 5**)

Diversity Issues (**paras 13, 16, 18, 20, 48**)

Number of Lifers held in a Local Prison (**para 43**)

Number of Foreign Nationals being held beyond their release date (**para 46**)

Visits (**para 65**)

IMB Members expenses (**paras 108-110**)

Prisoner movement issues (**para 113**)

The IMB would like to commend the following to the Minister

Investors In People accreditation (**page 5**)

The Elmley Induction Programme (**para 25**)

The Trust Project (**para 28**)

The approach to Foreign Nationals on Houseblock 4 (**paras 36-38**)

OMU surgeries on Houseblocks (**para 41**)

Elmley's Civil Unrest preparations (**para 51**)

The work of the Laundry (**para 56**)

The success of the Industrial Cleaning initiative (**para 57**)

Story Book Dads (**para 74**)

Issues for the Prison Service

Shortage of staff (**paras 3 & 4**)

Issues revolving around employment (**pages 4 & 5, paras 57-61**)

The number of serious incidents (**page 5**)

Prisoners housed in triple cells (**page 5**)

Diversity Issues (**paras 13, 16, 18, 20, 48**)

Number of Lifers held in a Local Prison (**para 43**)

Number of Foreign Nationals being held beyond their release date (**para 46**)

Visits (**para 65**)

Prisoner movement issues (**para 113**)

Issues for the Area Manager

Shortage of staff (**paras 3 & 4**)

Issues revolving around employment (**pages 4 & 5, paras 57-61**)

The number of serious incidents (**page 5**)

Prisoners housed in triple cells (**page 5**)

Diversity Issues (**paras 13, 16, 18, 20, 48**)

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SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PAST YEAR

The reporting year again began with the spectre of change hanging over the prison, and the cluster. Many aspects from the report on the Organisation of the Sheppey Cluster – published November 2010 - were adopted, for implementation in April 2011.

This largely entailed the three sites being run as three separate prisons with certain services and administration being clustered where it made economic and operational sense.

With the adoption of this model, the role of CEO effectively became redundant and subsequently the incumbent left the post, and the Governors of Elmley and Standford Hill switched positions. Certain functions reverted to 'in-house' and there were many other management changes.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

1. Elmley presents a secure environment for both prisoners and staff.
2. The use of Special Accommodation continues to remain at a relatively low level and staff are to be commended for their ability to 'de-escalate' situations that could otherwise result in increased use of these facilities.

Staff

3. Staffing levels have been short of optimum. Often running at between 15 and 25 below full staffing levels, but exacerbated by sick leave which on occasions has doubled this deficit. On-site staff have generally met this challenge well.
4. Again it has been noticeable in certain positions that there is a lack of experienced cover when members of staff are off sick or on holiday. This is particularly evident in areas where staff have specialised in a particular role. Excessive delays in response times from these areas can only cause frustration among the prisoners affected and increase any tensions that already exist.

Security

5. Prisoners are housed in a largely safe and secure environment. Statistics available show incidents remaining fairly steady throughout the year, with a marginal increase in those related to violence, and a slight dip at the end of the period. The number of adjudications showed a similar steady pattern. Neither set of statistics showed any major peaks or troughs.
6. There have been some issues during the period with delays in security clearance for certain jobs. Whilst this is frustrating for those running the activities as well as for the prisoners, we do understand that, because of the nature of some of the activities involved and the transient character of Elmley's prisoner population, proper investigation has to be carried out. However, there are still instances when there seem to be insubstantial reasons for some quite long delays and half empty activity areas.

Healthcare

7. The healthcare department is arranged over two floors, outpatients and inpatients. Both departments deal with a wide range of illnesses and health problems ranging from minor to some very difficult mental health problems.
8. The outpatients department has a doctor's surgery daily on an appointment basis; this is always very busy. To speed up the process a triage nurse is also available for consultation. There is usually a fairly long waiting time for appointments with a dentist or optician, as these specialists are only in the department once a week. All the areas in outpatients are clean and the pharmacy is well stocked. Generally the staff are very helpful when the IMB are enquiring about a prisoner.
9. Inpatients has 21 single cells, two 3 bedded wards and 2 constant watch cells. This area is always very busy and the accommodation is full most of the time. The staff are very cooperative and helpful when approached about an issue with a prisoner. The clerical staff are always available to answer questions, especially the head of clerical who will go to great lengths to assist.

Diversity

10. The Board is satisfied that the following Race Equality Policy Statement is well displayed in all appropriate places across the establishment and is reviewed by the DEAT team as and when required:

“The Prison Service has a positive duty and is committed to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. Unlawful discrimination on the basis of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin or religion is prohibited, as is any racially abusive or insulting language or behaviour on the part of any member of staff, prisoner or visitor. Action will be taken against anyone who contravenes this policy statement.”

11. Photographs of all DEAT members, including the REO and the governor, are displayed across the establishment. Similarly the prisoner representatives' photographs are displayed in appropriate places across the establishment.

12. 50% of the staff have received “Challenge it, Change it” training

13. Concerns:

- a. The Board has concerns that Healthcare do not attend all DEAT monthly meetings.

14. Race Equality

- a. Population breakdown by Ethnic group:
White British: 72.1%, BME: 27%, White Irish: 11.4%, Not Stated: 1.4%
- b. Prison Population Faiths:
C/E: 27%, No Religion: 33%, RC: 18%, Muslims: 7%, Christians: 5%

Mormon: 2%, Not Specified: 2%, Buddhist: 1%

15. Disabilities & Older Prisoners:

The Board is please to report that all prisoners with disabilities are identified and assessed at Reception.

- a. Total number of prisoners who have declared disabilities at reception: 152 (65% in work)
- b. Total number of prisoners declared to have learning disabilities: 30 (83% in work)
- c. Total number of prisoners declared to have mobility disabilities: 29 (55% in work)
- d. Total number of prisoners declared to have hearing difficulties: 10 (75% in work)
- e. Total number of prisoners 65 years of age and over: 17 (62% in work)
- f. Total number of prisoners 60 years of age and over: 33 (65% in work)
- g. Total % of visually impaired prisoners in work: 71%
- h. There are 7 wheelchair users – 6 on Houseblock 1 and 1 in Healthcare.

16. Concerns:

- a. No in cell activities available for older prisoners
- b. Limited choice for prisoners with reduced mobility, including wheelchair users, around education numeracy and literacy.
- c. Provision of suitable access to exercise yard (Houseblock 1).
- d. Older prisoners unable to access all aspects of the establishment regime (wheelchair and walking aid users)

17. Sexual Orientation

- a. Sexual orientation is now included in all DEATs meeting agenda.
- b. The Board is pleased to report positive success in the establishment with measures that are taken to identify and support prisoners with sexual orientation issues. The full-time Diversity Manager has contact with various organisations and issues are referred to him and privacy and confidentiality are maintained.

18. Concerns:

- a. There is no local policy on the issue of handling sexual orientation
- b. A forum has not yet been established.

19. Equalities Action plan deficiency:

- a. A Community Engagement Strategy in place.
- b. A fully inclusive Equalities Policy to be written and published.
- c. To find suitable work for prisoners with reduced mobility including wheelchair users.
- d. Improve communication procedures with Foreign Nationals.

20. Concerns:

- a. Not all the religious festivals are discussed at the DEAT meeting with regard to celebration.

Segregation Unit

21. A disturbing incident involving a prisoner seriously assaulting two Officers occurred in the Unit as a result of staff entering a cell unequipped. It was known that the prisoner was violent and may react, and was subject to a three Officer cell unlock. The incident was fully investigated and it was found that procedures followed, and decisions made, were correct.
22. Two Officers were suspended and subjected to investigation following use of force but the CPS offered no evidence at the court hearing. All Officers have now been moved to different positions.
23. The Segregation Unit has had three changes of management and this has promoted some difficulties within it. The latest appointment of a Senior Officer, who also doubles as a POA representative, has not been ideal as the individual is often away from the workface on other duties.
24. Overall, the Segregation Unit is well staffed and has settled down and is currently running smoothly. It has a very dedicated team and responds well to changes. It must be stated that despite the incident referred to above the Unit has coped extremely well with a number of very difficult prisoners over this period.

REGIMES & ACTIVITIES

Houseblocks

Houseblock 1/First Night Centre

25. The Induction Unit, based on Houseblock One interfaces effectively with the First Night Centre staff, and the induction process for all prisoners, usually the following morning, works extremely well. Recently HMP Norwich requested advice to assist with the update of their induction regime, which, according to a prisoner transferred from Elmley, "was not very good!"
26. The Board is concerned by the large numbers of sex offenders still resident on Houseblock 1 occupying one complete spur plus one landing on another spur. Problems include the need for individual gym sessions, individual listeners and an additional movement to the Chapel.

Houseblock 2

27. This Houseblock houses prisoners who are serving various lengths of sentence.
28. The Trust project is housed on Houseblock 2. This course is for prisoners who may be inside for the first time; men having difficulty in coping with time in prison; have problems with debt or other social problems outside prison such as debt or domestic difficulties. During the induction procedure Trust project workers will identify men who they think will benefit from this project, they are then interviewed and given the opportunity to start on the scheme. The course is

conducted over ten sessions. There have been 8 courses to date and 72 prisoners have completed the course. It is proving a very worthwhile project.

Houseblock 3

29. There have been considerable staffing issues over the past year due to sickness and Officers on light duties etc. This has meant that standards in continuity and consistency have been less than expected. Despite this, the Houseblock management has continued to maintain a good service.
30. 95% of the HB3 prisoners are on the IDTS scheme and it is reported that provided they obtain their medication at the correct time, then everything runs smoothly. Although this provides a calming influence for the majority of the daytime, it remains a concern that so many are dependent upon the system.
31. Since the new Governor has been in post he has taken a great interest in the scheme and, with his Deputy, has made minor changes to the regime which appear to be working.
32. In most cases, when prisoners enter the system they go to Houseblock 1 where a urine sample is taken and tested. If positive the prisoner will be taken directly to Houseblock 3. There are still problems where some prisoners do not receive their Induction in good time, or even at all. It would be helpful if a version of Induction can be brought to House Block 3, perhaps twice a week.
33. There are still some ongoing concerns in respect of the IDTS scheme at HMP Elmley relating to the treatment and maintenance programmes but the Board is pleased that there is a reduction programme for those prisoners who are sentenced. A maintenance programme is now only for those prisoners on remand. IDTS will not take on any prisoner who develops a drug habit within the prison and these are referred to the CARAT team.
34. Overall the system of Healthcare/Maintenance works, but there have been quite a few staff difficulties, and an uneasy alliance continues to exist between prison officers and the IDTS team.
35. It is noted that there is no disabled cell within Houseblock 3.

Houseblock 4

36. This Houseblock is now virtually full with Foreign Nationals, there are however 20 others on Houseblock 1 due to non-compliance with the regime. There are some 15 UK prisoners who have adapted well to the new function and are currently acting as Reps until Foreign Nationals take over. There is a mixed Violence Reduction team and this works extremely well.
37. The proposal and implementation of a Foreign National unit appeared to happen quickly but the staff have rapidly adapted. There is now a steady influx of Foreign Nationals. This is a very settled environment and credit must be given to the staff for adapting to the needs of a completely different set of issues. The staff/prisoner relationship is good, which has facilitated a smooth transition.

38. Each Friday the UKBA attend for a surgery, and this appears to be working well. In addition a great deal of effort has been made to open a translation section, which, it is hoped, will cater for the majority of languages. There are already a large number of prisoner handbooks in many languages, which explain the basic rules and regulations of prison life.

Houseblock 5

39. It was good to finally see some re-decoration which fixed a long-standing problem of peeling paintwork that had become a health hazard.

House Block 6

40. From its opening Houseblock 6 was volatile but the management has dealt with the teething troubles admirably, and the IMB has few problem applications emanating from this area.

OMU

41. This year has seen the movement of the OMU back into the establishment under the direction and authority of the Elmley Governor. The Activity Allocation unit has also moved into OMU. This has meant that activity allocation is becoming more sophisticated and interface levels with prisoners are increasing. The Board applaud the weekly OMU, OCA, Public Protection 'surgeries' being held on Houseblocks.

42. The Public Protection department continues to be effective and robust. OCA output is exceptional. OMU are putting systems in place to overcome the vast backlog of work in the department, but operate understaffed and with tight budgetary restrictions, which is of concern to the Board.

Lifers

43. Elmley still continues to house an inordinately large number of 'Lifers'. Whilst the Board is fully cognisant of the population pressures in the Lifer estate, and the increasingly good work carried out within Elmley, it is constantly apparent that this prison cannot provide the regime that these prisoners need. Currently the breakdown is as follows:

a. ISPP	49
b. Mandatory	28
c. Discretionary	8
d. Total	85

Foreign Nationals

44. Foreign National Population:

Poland: 8%, Ireland: 11.4%, India: 2%, Pakistan: 3%, Sierra Leone: 2%, Sri Lanka: 3%, Iran: 2%, Slovakia: 4%, Afghanistan: 4%, Algeria: 2%, Nigeria: 3%, Albania: 3%, Congo: 2%, Romania: 3%, Latvia: 7%, Holland: 5%, Germany: 2%, Iraq: 2%, Ghana: 2%, Portugal: 2%, Lithuania: 12%, Czech Republic: 3%, Bulgaria: 3%, Other: 15%

45. Total number of Foreign Nationals: 185

46. Total number of Sole Detainees (held beyond sentence expiry): 30

47. Houseblock 4 is designated to accommodate Foreign Nationals and the S.O is successfully setting up all the resources, training and translation services in 13 different languages.

- a. 13 different languages have been identified to meet the needs of the prisoners in the establishment.
- b. Staff in the Houseblock have had training sessions delivered by the UKBA in relation to understanding Foreign National prisoners.
- c. The Board is pleased to note that a weekly surgery is held by UKBA staff.
- d. The Board commends the way that RIRF complaints are investigated by an external local community Links representative.

48. Board concerns

- a. Call for 5 (insufficient phone call time on phone card)
- b. Loss of mail containing money sent by relatives.
- c. Decline in enhanced regime due to lack of translated information.
- d. Language barrier problems which make it difficult for FN prisoners to apply for jobs, education and training.
- e. Improve communication procedures with Foreign National prisoners.

Reception

49. The daily average number of movements in and out of this busy local prison is 43, including escorts. It is noted that the commitment by staff to provide an efficient and effective service to prisoners is excellent.

50. The main interface between members of the IMB and Reception staff however is when making enquiries on behalf of prisoners who make applications to the Board regarding loss or mis-management of personal property. The MoJ will be aware that this problem is not exclusive to Elmley. From the statistics furnished elsewhere in this report it will be seen that prisoner personal property problems take up proportionally more of our time than any other areas/topics that we deal with. Members of staff are usually very helpful in support of our investigations.

51. As a result of the Civil Unrest in London and elsewhere in August, Elmley was initially tasked to provide 60 places for those convicted of offences committed during this period. Although ultimately receipt of the anticipated number of prisoners did not materialise, Reception's state of readiness was upgraded in quick time by volunteers (as was the whole prison) to be potentially open "24/7" to meet this initial demand. A highly commendable effort.

52. In July 2011 there was a change in the contractor taking prisoners to and from court and inter-prison transfers, when Geoamy took over from SERCO. The initial major “teething troubles” have now receded due to an effective interface being established at middle and higher management level. Currently though, there remains scope for improvement in performance by the contractor.

Drugs

53. The Drug Strategy Team meets regularly to discuss current issues and to monitor trends. Although a relatively large committee, it is well managed and run. It addresses many issues and encourages teams to liaise with each other when decisions are to be made.

54. The IDTS programme is conducted on Houseblock 3 and this is reported under that heading.

55. The number of mandatory drug tests was maintained at the required level. However the increased use of Spice, not detectable in the usual drug tests, is some cause for concern.

Employment

56. Last year we singled out the laundry for its commercial enterprise. It has continued to build on that and has further increased the volume of work. It now handles all the laundry that was previously undertaken at Coldingley prison, has a contract with a London hospital, and is in the process of securing another commercial contract. To meet all these deadlines, the prisoner work force now work through the lunch period and on occasions at weekends as well. This is a prison industry at its best and the staff are to be congratulated.

57. As anticipated, the loss of the T-Boat shop (which employed 40-45) to Swaleside prison, has resulted in the loss of employment places as the Brick Construction course that has replaced it, has only on average employed 7 prisoners. The introduction of training courses under the auspices of Education must at first sight be seen as progressive and innovative, unfortunately the uptake has been disproportionately low, and not contributed significantly to employment opportunities in the prison. The hairdressing salon has only averaged 3 trainees and the car mechanics only 6; nor would there appear to be any sign of improvement on these numbers for the immediate future. At the present time these have to be viewed as rather expensive experiments. This is all the more perplexing in the light of the huge success of the Industrial Cleaning Training course. That now averages 16 students a day and has issued over 300 certificates, 197 for the full course, 73 for bio-hazard cleaning and 130 in-house short hygiene courses. The unit now takes on all bio-hazard work at the prison in-house, and the saving against bringing in outside contractors is in the region of £40,000 to £50,000 per annum.

58. As Elmley is ostensibly a local prison, its real requirement is for volume work, but this has been further undermined by the ‘Poppies & Balloons’ workshop, which

thrived at Elmley, also being moved to Swaleside. It is understood that work from Flo Past would increase significantly, but this has not materialised and must now be in doubt as they have opened a new workshop at Canterbury prison.

59. The current proposal is to make all work part-time, contingent on also undertaking part-time education (with the emphasis on basic skills in Maths and English). This would appear to have a degree of merit and would increase the scope of purposeful activity significantly if applied across the Board. However there are dangers as neither shop instructors nor prisoners view it in a positive light. It would also require a greater degree of organisation and commitment from all staff than is currently evident. There has to remain a question as to whether it can be achieved, so the way forward needs to be approached with both caution and sensitivity. Keeping the workshop instructors 'on-board' is vital to the future and they have an excellent track record to date. There is no shortage of prisoners willing to participate in basic workshops, and production levels have been high. The constant removal of such work from Elmley has not made sense, particularly in light of the additional Houseblock opening this year. Keeping the workshop instructors informed of proposals and ensuring that they contribute positively to the regime at Elmley is important if the way forward is to remain constructive.
60. Care should be exercised that this initiative is not used to cap prisoners' pay in light of potential increased administration due to implementation of the Prisoners' Earnings Act.
61. The optimum situation would obviously be full-time activity for every prisoner, but it is difficult to see how this can be achieved especially since volume industries are being moved out.

Chaplaincy

62. The Board acknowledges the Chaplaincy as a well managed part of the establishment in the provision of faith support, embracing all cultures/religions and celebrations. All faiths are catered for and prisoners have the opportunity to attend a large range of religious services.
63. The Chaplaincy team works well and is visible around the establishment, engaging with staff as well as prisoners. They are present at reviews, meetings and at meal times.

Visitor Centre and Visits

64. The Visitor Centre is well organised with OSGs' servicing this area as it is located outside the establishment. There has been good progress in the refurbishment of facilities for the children's play area and also disabled provisions. The Visits Hall is well designed with extra seats and the provision of a play area for children with a television. There have been no major incidents noted in visits. Family days are held where meals are served, especially after

Islamic festivals. The total number of visits for the year November 2010/2011 is 25,776.

65. Concerns:

- a. Visits Policies and Procedures still outstanding.
- b. It is very expensive to purchase items from the vending machine/snacks/beverages in the Visitor Centre and Visits Hall. This concern was raised last year but so far there has been no improvement, as this is run and manned by outside caterers and not the establishment.
- c. The Board is still concerned that there must be a proper procurement protocol for the Sheppey cluster to take into account that visitors come from out of area and even overseas (Foreign National prisoners' visitors).
- d. Due to budgetary constraint the number of days and length of visit has been reduced. It is a major issue for those coming from out of the county.
- e. No forum in place for staff and management to discuss issues or concerns.

Education

66. Manchester College, which is part of Manchester College of Further Education, is the body delivering education at Elmley. They now supply approximately 36000 hours of education per year and have over 50 full and part time teachers.

67. There are no "terms" and education is operational 52 weeks a year, closed only for bank holidays. There are three overarching headings. Vocational - Basic - Social and Life Style.

68. Vocational

- a. Encompasses such classes as, Bricklaying, which commenced in May 2011, Hairdressing which commenced in October 2011, and Motor Engineering.
- b. All the classrooms or practical work areas are fully stocked with tools and equipment necessary.
- c. I.T Design Work. Concentrates on Business use and Development, and Art Work.
- d. All the courses are fully accredited by City & Guilds and qualifications are obtainable.

69. Basic

- a. This is the traditional 3 Rs and it covers all basic levels and is taught in its own classroom or in addition in the vocation area, or on the Houseblocks.

70. Social and Lifestyle

- a. This includes such headings as Diversity, Healthy Living, Keeping Fit, Drugs & Drink Awareness, Debt & Money Management, Interview Skills including CV Production & Interviewing Techniques with role play for building confidence and experience.
- b. Staff will visit pupils at their work place and their Houseblock to give them help and advice and they will also set homework and training schedules.
- c. There are approximately 2500 places per week of which 1300 have been

allocated by HMPS and the attendance rate runs at some 73%.

- d. The attendance rate at the vocational classes is lower due to the time to obtain security clearance, and the short-term nature of Elmley sentences.
- e. Open University Degrees and other Distance Learning are managed by HMPS and are available to all.

Library

- 71. This is a clean and friendly area, but is underused, due mainly to the lack of officers to accompany the prisoners to and from, and while there. The duration of stay in the library is also very short.
- 72. The number of books lost is still high compared with outside facilities and institutions, running at approximately 20%. It is felt that when any prisoner is transferred, books are scooped up with his possessions and bagged without checking ownership, though this may be disputed by staff.
- 73. The amount of books loaned is far below that of an establishment nearby, with similar numbers of prisoners, and we feel that the two points mentioned above are the main causes.
- 74. This year saw the start of "Story Book Dads" where a small book is read into a recorder, sent to HMP Dartmoor for editing and the inclusion of sound effects, returned in a presentation cover, and then forwarded to the reader's children as, for example, a bedtime story.
- 75. This obviously helps to keep the family together, and helps and encourages reading improvement, with assistance of the staff, as the reader may take days to gain the confidence to read into the recording machine.
- 76. The Board would like to see better use of the library overall as it is a good resource, but lacks support.

Physical Education

- 77. The gymnasium staff provide a very popular service to Elmley, the additional facilities completed last year have added to the high use of the gym.
- 78. The population rise due to the filling of Houseblock 6 is adding to the high numbers served by the facility, by both prisoners and staff.
- 79. Activities conducted both by staff and prisoners continue to raise funds for local causes.
- 80. Users referred via the health training continue at a high level.
- 81. Purposeful activities include C & R training for staff, First Aid, Manual Handling and Team Building. With the new addition of the Bedgebury Project which is

being pioneered by the Gym staff in conjunction with the Forestry Commission at Bedgebury Pinetum and Standford Hill Prison.

82. Efficiency savings still cause concern as the prison regime, and in particular mass movement delays, cause loss of use of the facilities.

Kitchen & Food

83. The Board is pleased to note that the kitchen and catering facilities at HMP Elmley have functioned well during this reporting period. There has been a change of menu, that, while at first showing a few teething troubles, has produced positive responses.

84. The kitchen is still facing a few issues regarding equipment but the major problems highlighted in previous reports seem to have been resolved. The Board is continuing to monitor these issues.

85. It has been reported to the Board that due to sickness, staffing levels have, during this reporting period, put pressure on leave allocation. The Board would like to commend the Manager and kitchen staff, when, because of a major problem which made the service of a hot meal impossible, baguettes were provided at very short notice, for both Elmley and Standford Hill prisons.

86. Daily spend is currently £2.00 per head, and as the new Houseblock is now on line the Kitchen serves approximately 1780 meals per service.

Violence Reduction

87. This reporting period has seen a marginal increase in violence related incidents, though not as marked as last year. Of 732 incidents investigated by the staff 593 were proved and the range reported includes: intimidation, bullying, fighting and assaults

88. It is worthy of note that during this time there has been a slight, but significant decrease in the number of assaults on both prisoners and staff. In addition it is the Board's view that the high success rate of "81% of investigations proved" can be related to prisoner confidence in reporting violence in the knowledge that relevant action will be taken by members of staff. It should be noted, however, that of the incidents proven there are approximately 5% labelled "no action." This is attributed to: timely intervention by staff, prisoner release or "poor quality" investigations.

89. The majority of incidents relate to debts, confrontations over drugs or mobile phones and "hooch". Currently the spectrum of punishment for these offences range from IEP action to prison/independent adjudications or the criminal courts, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

90. At present there are 20 trained Violence Reduction Reps, spread throughout the Houseblocks with an effective training regime in place.

Self Harm & Suicide Prevention

91. There has been a slight decrease in the number of Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened over the past year which is an encouraging trend. The main reasons for a prisoner being subject to this process are: self harm, threat of self harm, depression due to family concerns or being bullied by other prisoners. Bullying also involves the Violence Reduction staff. The current standard of completion of ACCT documentation is rated "poor" and it is a recommendation by the IMB that future staff mentoring should be aimed at compliance with PSO270, Ch1-1.2.1 (all officers are trained to this level during their POELTS course). By way of balance it is the Board's view that ACCT Reviews are conducted effectively, particularly in Healthcare and that overall there is a caring regime in Elmley.
92. At present there are 21 ACCT Assessors and 4 Trainers (only 2 active) in the prison. It is understood that the ACCT document is to be updated (to Version 5) and a training regime is currently being introduced, with one of the prison Chaplains due to attend a course in December 2011.
93. Listener training is conducted by the Samaritans and at present there are 15. The success of the selection and training of prisoners for this key role is reflected in a significant number of them moving on in quick time to Category D status and open conditions, clearly to Elmley's detriment. The next Listener Course will take place in January 2012. The Samaritans celebrated 20 years of working in HM Prisons earlier this year – a record to be applauded.

Deaths in Custody

94. There have been 3 deaths in custody over this reporting period. One prisoner was found hanging by a ligature in his cell. 2 prisoners are believed to have died from natural causes. At present the inquests on all 3 are awaited.

General

95. It is noted that in September 2011 the Violence Reduction, Self Harm/Suicide Prevention and Diversity Team was reduced from 3 Senior Officers and 1 Admin Assistant to 2 Senior Officers and 1 Administrative Assistant. Time will tell whether this action was judicious.
96. Violence Reduction and Self Harm/Suicide Prevention Meetings have recently been combined. It is assumed that the aim of this course of action is to promote/ensure maximum attendance, and thereby participation, by the relevant prison staff and prisoner reps in the future.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Works

97. Planned Periodic Maintenance is running at a deficit of 5%. This is due to a staff shortfall of 3 tradesmen. General repairs are running at an average of 450 per month.
98. The fire alarm system installed 2 years ago is causing stress throughout the prison both for the users and in its maintenance. The main problem is blockages in the filters used in the smoke sensor system which cause a high workload for the Works Department with cleaning, and causes a constant noise of false alarms in the Houseblock Command Posts. The Works Department currently deploys 2 men every other day to alleviate the situation. It is understood that the Governor is liaising with Area Management to identify a solution.
99. Finance is very tight again, and there seems to be around £80K shortfall halfway through the financial year. With this type of maintenance the final outcome of the budget is dictated by the work arising through the year.
100. Specific Areas and Locations:
- a. The damage that occurs very often in the Segregation Unit takes a high level of input to repair.
 - b. The shower replacement started on Houseblock 5 and will continue throughout the prison.
 - c. Disability work on Houseblock 1 is now complete. This £24,000 project comprised complete renovation of the shower areas and a wheelchair lift to facilitate access to the hotplate.
 - d. The Kitchen is having its water boilers replaced.
 - e. The Communication Suite is having its air conditioning renewed.
101. Completed Works:
- a. Initial funding of £120,000 for new showers throughout the prison has been reduced to £38,000. This has been used to fund new showers in Houseblock 5, the highest priority and one shower room in Houseblock 1.
 - b. Over the past few months CCTV cameras have been installed in Houseblock 3 and funding is currently being sought to install this equipment in the Segregation Unit.
102. New Works:
- a. In the kitchen funding has been acquired to replace 2 steaming ovens.
 - b. At present funding is being sought to replace the computer controls, gates and doors at the prison entrance, i.e.: vehicle and personnel access/egress to the prison.

Grounds

103. The gardens have been a credit to the ground staff again this year.
104. The litter outside the Houseblocks most mornings, though, gives the work parties a task to clean up. Some days this is carried out more efficiently than

others, and of course inclement weather also hinders the process. These areas are at their worst on Monday mornings when they are awash with litter. It is reiterated that this situation is probably not exclusive to HMP Elmley

WORK OF THE BOARD

Board Meetings

105. The Board held 12 meetings during the period 1st November 2010 to the 31st October 2011. Allowing for members on sabbatical there was an average of 83% membership attendance. Two members completed their probationary periods and their appointments were confirmed, one new member was appointed and there were no resignations. This brings Board numbers to 14, which is double the level of three years ago. Given this healthy position, the Board is not actively recruiting; however there are currently three interviews in the pipeline. Three members have been on sabbatical at various times during the year. Two of these are now back performing IMB duties.

106. Mindful of maintaining a level of expertise whilst keeping down costs, the Board includes a regular guest speaker slot at its meetings to cover areas of particular concern or interest. Members also try to incorporate attendance at any prison meetings into their Rota days.

107. During the year the Board again acquired a new clerk, the second within the year.

Members' Expenses

108. Through most of this year there has been concern regarding proposals for the compensation to members for out of pocket expenses. It has to be stated now that any initiative that does not fully compensate members for carrying out their statutory duties would not only be morally wrong, but could cause difficulty for Boards in remote areas such as Sheppey.

109. Elmley members are drawn from a wide radius, and one of our members has a round trip from home to the prison of 104 miles. It has to be stressed that his appointment was a transfer in from another Board that was organised by the Secretariat. If the proposal of full reimbursement for only the first 1000 miles is adopted, then this member would not be compensated for attending the twelve Board meetings, let alone any Rota Visits or other commitments. This is grossly unfair. This is a voluntary role and should not cost the individual.

110. The result of any failure by the Ministry to ensure that these volunteers are not out of pocket will result in Boards losing members and having fewer members willing to take on further responsibilities, which could have dire effects on the monitoring of prisons.

Rota Visits

111. There were 192 Rota Visits during the year to 31st October 2011, an average of 16 per month. With Board numbers now up, this has allowed members to visit in pairs on more frequent occasions, meaning that areas that the Board has in the past neglected can now be given closer attention. Members also attended on other occasions, for meetings such as Violence Reduction, Drug Strategy and Course presentations, Diversity etc. as well as for training, interviewing, escorting visiting Boards and administrative duties, though with one eye on expenditure members tried to ensure that these coincided with Rota commitments as far as possible.

Applications

112. The Board dealt with 702 applications during the year to 31st October 2011; an increase of 35 from the previous year. Although we still have to return a percentage of applications where officers should have intervened on the prisoners' behalf, the Board is pleased to note that these instances are becoming fewer.

113. Several areas showed marked changes and the group that showed consistent increases revolved around prisoner movement where applications relating to categorisation, release/HDC and transfers all showed marked rises. Some of this undoubtedly relates to the high level of the prison population generally which allows for little flexibility in the geographical location of prisoners. This flies in the face of one of the main tenets of the rehabilitation process – maintenance of family links. Complaints about Visits also rose, adding fuel to this argument.

114. As with many establishments we see the usual reason for applications at the top of the list – property, though this showed a decrease from previous years. Healthcare issues have steadied somewhat but still rank second in the list. Members still find it difficult to challenge diagnosis and prescription, even where they believe there may be grounds for complaint – though it must be stressed that this is a very rare situation. Most of the issues revolve around delays in receiving, and type of, medication.

115. The biggest increase in percentage terms came, worryingly, in the bullying and violence category, where applications tripled. Whilst analysis shows no pattern, this is clearly something that we will monitor.

116. Complaints about Location again reared their head this year after last year's fall. A proportion of this large increase would seem to be linked to the increase in applications concerning Adjudications. Prisoners who refuse to locate for what they perceive to be legitimate reasons and are then the subject of an adjudication, tend to follow this up with the IMB. Few of these complaints are found to have real substance on investigation.

117. Despite the maintenance of the Friday Immigration surgeries, complaints in this area have risen. Most of these centre on prisoners who are being held post release date. This is a difficult area for IMB as we can rarely obtain a substantive response for the complainant.
118. A further increase in Legal related applications this year again highlighted an area where we generally cannot help prisoners. We cannot give legal advice and that is usually what is required. With the withdrawal of the prison Legal Services support, we expect more frustration in this area.
119. The fall in Canteen complaints is welcome news. The new provider seems to have got their act together.
120. The fall in applications concerning Employment has been somewhat surprising given the shortfall in the number of jobs and the length of time it sometimes takes applications to be processed. It is likely however, that the re-location of the Activity Allocation team back into Elmley has had a positive effect.
121. Confidential Access complaints showed a marked increase, but this was largely due to prisoners inappropriately using this system to circumvent the regular complaints process.
122. Most other categories showed relatively modest fluctuation.
123. The miscellaneous category showed a wide array of issues that individually displayed little statistical relevance.
124. Towards the end of the period there was a marked decrease in the rate of received applications. This, coupled with a decrease in the number of complaints received by the prison, may signify that the new triplicate application process adopted by HMP Elmley has had an immediate impact. If so, this initiative is to be applauded; however, it is early days, but we are hopeful.

125. The complete analysis of our applications was as follows:

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>+/- % over 2010</u>
Property	84	12.59%	-17.65%
Health/Hygiene	81	12.14%	-10.99%
Categorisation	80	11.99%	45.45%
Release/HDC etc.	63	9.45%	80.00%
Transfers (In/Out)	59	8.85%	20.41%
Visits	40	6.00%	21.21%
Complaints Process	30	4.50%	3.45%
Confidential Access	25	3.75%	47.06%
Money	25	3.75%	4.17%
Bullying/Violence	24	3.60%	200.00%
Legal	24	3.60%	14.29%
Telephone	23	3.45%	21.05%
Location	22	3.30%	144.44%
Staff	19	2.85%	-24.00%
Employment	15	2.25%	-63.41%
Immigration Issues	13	1.95%	85.71%
OMU	13	1.95%	-18.75%
Adjudications	11	1.65%	120.00%
Mail	9	1.35%	-43.75%
Diversity	6	0.90%	-14.29%
Canteen	3	0.45%	-78.57%
Catalogue Purchases	2	0.30%	0.00%
Miscellaneous	31	4.65%	-26.19%
Total	702	105.25%	5.25%

Recruitment

Recruitment has again been good this year with one more new member taking up post, and the two new ones from last year finishing their probationary periods successfully. We have had no resignations; however we have had at any one time up to three members on sabbatical. We currently have three prospective members awaiting interview. Board strength stands at fourteen at present, with two on sabbatical.

Training

Board Members have attended all compulsory training and essential voluntary training.

CONCLUSION

It is the view of the Board that in the year under review the prison has maintained a good standard in most areas of care. The return of certain responsibilities to the prison's governing Governor is, in the opinion of the Board, a step forward. Whilst we also support the de-clustering of certain functions, we fully understand and support the economies of scale associated with centralisation where it makes sense.

We do believe that at times the prison is operating at or below minimum staffing levels – maybe not technically, but realistically – a situation that is exacerbated by sickness and inexperienced staff.

RECOMMENDATION

The Secretary of State is recommended to note the quality of work undertaken at Elmley during yet another challenging and changing year.

Mr. R. C. Chapman
Chair
IMB HMP/YOI Elmley
January 2012